



**Coalition for a Safe & Healthy CT**  
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## **Scientists, Citizens, Public Officials Send Legislators a Message in a Bottle:**

### **It's time to ban toxic bisphenol A, but that is just the tip of the iceberg**

Hartford—Advocates and public officials gathered at the Legislative Office Building today to send legislators a message in a bottle: toxic bisphenol A does not belong in food and beverage containers, and Connecticut needs to lead the way toward safer solutions to this and other chemicals of high concern. Proposed legislation in Connecticut would address the problem of toxic chemicals in household and other products, and legislators and advocates with the Coalition for a Safe & Healthy Connecticut are calling for action.

"Chronic diseases and disorders are on the rise, burdening our families and the economy," said **Dr. Mary Jane Williams, chair of Government Affairs for the Connecticut Nurses' Association**. "Smarter safety laws that move us toward safer solutions will result in real public health benefits."

A growing body of research shows the presence of toxic chemicals that are linked to cancers, learning disabilities, reproductive problems, asthma and other health risks in children's products. Examples include the chemicals of concern lawmakers are targeting this year: bisphenol-A in food and beverage containers, toxic cleaning chemicals in schools, and polybrominated diphenyl ethers (toxic flame retardants).

"We need to switch to safer solutions wherever feasible, protecting workers and putting Connecticut on the path toward more green jobs and a clean technology economy at the same time," said **Debra Belancik of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers**.

Public officials both in and outside the legislature concurred. Both co-chairs of the legislature's Environment Committee provided words of support, along with Connecticut **Attorney General Richard Blumenthal** and **Secretary of the State Susan Bysiewicz**.

"The bills this session are common sense," said **Representative Richard Roy (D, Milford)**, who led the charge for last year's legislation and continues to serve as co-chair of the Environment Committee. "We should have safe food and beverage containers, green cleaning in schools, and a framework for setting priorities and phasing out chemicals of high concern."

#### Coalition for a Safe and Healthy Connecticut: 2009 Legislative Priorities

- **Safer Alternatives Bill (HB 6111)**
  - States need to lead the way toward comprehensive solutions that move us away from a "one chemical at a time" approach. The bill would prioritize hazardous substances for phase-out when safer alternatives are available, and provide technical assistance to companies seeking to transition to safer alternatives.

- **Phasing out BPA from Children’s Products (HB 5499)**
  - Bisphenol A (BPA) is a high production volume chemical used to make epoxy resin and polycarbonate plastic products, including some kinds of baby bottles and food storage and heating containers. BPA is an endocrine disruptor that has been linked to a number of health impacts at low doses, including insulin resistance, gene changes, metabolic syndrome, altered brain development and sexual behavior, and prostate cancer. Safe solutions exist, and many companies have pledged to stop using BPA in the products they manufacture and sell. Canada recently announced plans to ban BPA in baby bottles.
  
- **Green Cleaning in Schools**
  - In 2007, Connecticut passed a Public Act 100, requiring all state buildings to use certified green cleaning products, and the coalition is working to extend this requirement to include schools.

Other related legislation that the coalition supports:

- **PBDE phase out (HB 5477)**
  - PBDEs are chemical fire retardants found in everyday items like furniture, televisions, and computers, and have been associated with health and developmental effects, including impaired memory, learning, and behavior changes. Safer alternatives can be used, and Maine, Hawaii, and Washington have all passed laws to phase out deca PBDE.

*The Coalition for a Safe & Healthy CT is a growing alliance of over two dozen organizations—health, labor, scientific, environmental, faith and community groups—working to prevent harm to human health and the environment from toxic chemicals.*

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